

[Unemployed Division]

Beliefs and Customs - Religious Customs 18

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Vivian Morris

ADDRESS 225 West 130 Street

DATE May 16, 1939

SUBJECT Unemployed Division — Abyssinia Church

1. Date and time of interview
2. Place of interview
3. Name and address of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Vivian Morris

ADDRESS 225 West 130 Street

DATE May 16, 1939

SUBJECT Unemployed Division — Abyssinia Church

'Taint fair, nope, 'tain't—the way they runs things here. Seems you gotta belong to a Church before you gits a job. Whut'sa idear a that? Didn' yuh hear whut she jus' ast me? I give her me whole life's hist'ry an' she asts me glib like—'Whut Church, please?' Whut's 'at gotta do with it? How come yuh gotta git religion before yuh can gits yuhself a job? Anyhow whut's a Church gotta do with me bein' outa work? If they's gonna git yuh work why ast so many fool questions eyein' yuh whole hist'ry with a fine comb?—It's rainin' outside.

Yeh, I gotta trade—plumber. Been at it a nice coupla years.—Member of a union? No, lady, can't say so. How came I ain'? I'll tell yuh—jus' fifty bucks col' cash stan's between me ana union. I ain' speakin' agains' 'em but fifty bucks is a lotta dough an' I ain' got anywhere near fifty bucks.

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I got two kids an' if you don' think it takes dough to keeps their mouths with food an' cloes on their shoul'ers yuh got a good guess, yes, mam! They needs shoes right now.

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Jus' think whut fifty bucks could buy for me an' me kids— fifty bucks! ——— I ain' on relief. I'm a janitor, an' man! I'm sick a dat too. Dat's wyy I'm here. We lives ina basement. It ain' no place for kids t'live in. We gotta git outa the cellar. 'Taint fair for kids. Them kids got a good mind an' it ain't right to keep 'em in a basement. Ma boy's fifteen las' month. Good swimmer—gonna be a champ when he's growed up—yessir, lady, a champeen sum day. Ain' never yet had a Negro champ swimmer. He's gonna be it.——

Yes, mam, I'm James Kelly. I does laborin' work. Sixty cents a hour? O.K., I'll take it. —-'Taint fair, so help me God! I'm a plumber by trade—pays 'leven fifty a day.

No I ain' in the union—an' I ain' gonna start scabbin'. —Me kids won't stan' for it I tell yuh right now. Them kids are plenty bright. They kin teach me lotsa things.

One thing sure—there ain' no heaven, so I can't sit down when I git to heaven. I always thought I would. I done scuffle so much down here I hopes me kids don' have t'scuffle like I has an' like I'm doin'.

Bein' black sure is a curse——

but bein' poor is sure worse.

I gotta be gittin' mam. This here job's out in Staten Island—a long way fum here. G'bye.
